Why Spirit in Action?
by Boyd Cothran, SIA Supporter

“It’s like microcredit but instead of paying it back, we ask that they pay it forward.” That is how I describe Spirit in Action when people ask me what it is that SIA does.

Ever since the Bangladeshi economist Muhammad Yunus won the Nobel Peace Prize for pioneering microfinance, average Americans have seen the idea of helping entrepreneurs in developing countries as an attainable goal.

Kiva, Opportunity International, and Heifer International have all developed amazing ways of taking small amounts of money and changing lives in a big way!

But microfinance has its limits.

For the very poor, especially those who make less than a dollar a day, even microloans are beyond their means. Moreover, the cost of coordinating rural businesses and the cost of transferring money, as much as 10 percent per transaction, makes repaying small amounts inefficient.

That is why Spirit in Action is a microgrant organization.

We take small amounts and give entrepreneurs in developing countries the opportunity to succeed. We don’t ask that they pay us back but that they use their success to give someone else in their community a chance to get ahead.

With the help of Spirit in Action, these amazing entrepreneurs pay back our initial investment and instead of sending money around the world, we ask that they reinvest it in their own communities for us.

Microgrants, therefore, are both an efficient and effective tool for real change!

So, next time someone asks, Spirit in Action, what do they do? Tell them that we support entrepreneurs who reinvest in their communities.

Read more about the “Sharing the Gift” program on pg 5

www.godsspiritinaction.org/news
Read the SIA blog to keep up-to-date!
Highlighting SIA Board Member Helen Dannelly

Helen Dannelly, a Methodist minister's daughter, is a musician and artist by avocation and a fundraiser by employment. Helen grew up singing in church choirs, took up guitar lessons when, as a fourth grader, she saw Christopher Plummer sing "Edelweiss" to his children in "The Sound of Music". She and her two sisters (of which she is the middle) took piano lessons for years. She has also been painting ever since she stuck her hands in a bucket of finger paint in kindergarten, and later studied sculpture (bronze casting) at the University of Minnesota. She is an exhibiting artist whose work is in private collections throughout the country. Her most recent exhibition was in San Francisco in September and October.

Helen has been doing fundraising for over ten years and sees it much more as relationship-building than asking people for money. She has worked at Macalester College in St. Paul, Minnesota, at San Jose State University, at Mills College in Oakland, at UCSF, and currently at California Pacific Medical Center in San Francisco where she will be helping to raise $300M for a new hospital over the next few years. Her favorite definition of fundraising is actually from theologian Henri Nouwen who, in a booklet he penned called "The Spirituality of Fundraising", wrote: "Fundraising is inviting others to join with you in your vision and mission." Moved by the huge impact that small gifts from individuals can have on the lives of others less fortunate, Helen is delighted to be involved with Spirit in Action and the work we do. She invites us all to be as generous as possible during this season of giving.

Del's Wisdom: HOW TO DISAGREE IN LOVE

When one holds a spiritual conviction close and dear to one’s heart, [...] it is difficult to encounter those who may be in opposition to that conviction. Despite our belief that our convictions are God-given [truth], these are generally our own opinions, formed on the basis of the kind of life experience we have had. Since everyone’s life experience is different, it is impossible to expect everyone to carry the same convictions, even within the community of faith.

What do we do when we encounter someone with whom we have serious or even violent disagreement? The first thing we need to do is remind ourselves that persons are more important than ideas. To alienate ourselves from a person because of a disagreement over an idea is foolish and immature.

The second thing is to assess the nature of the disagreement and try to understand why we are so upset. Why is this matter causing us such anxiety? Is it not a signal for us to look within instead of lashing out in anger at someone else? Those things which cause us distress and alarm are generally hints that we still have some inner work to do. The soul thoroughly grounded in Christ’s love will be able to make gentle responses to the other person, even when there are differences in opinion.

To disagree is normal, even within the family of God. But to extend those disagreements to the point of abuse and hostility is a disgrace to the name we profess to carry.

**Many more of Del's thought-provoking writings and meditations can be found on our website at: http://godsspiritinaction.org/delswritings.htm

OUR MISSION: SPIRIT IN ACTION is a network of committed people world-wide who are serving God by empowering others. Spirit in Action is a 501(c)(3), tax-exempt, charitable foundation. Tax ID # 93-1207351

SIA Board Retreat, May 2009, in Redwood Valley, CA
Pictured Above, Front Row: Dennis Johnson, Maggie Arner, Tanya Cothran. Back Row: Karl Johnson, Helen Dannelly, Marcia Larsen, Ray Larsen, Tish Bayer, John Bayer, Pat Manning, Marsha Johnson

SPIRIT IN ACTION
Del Anderson, founder
Tanya Thomas Cothran, Administrator & Newsletter editor

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GIFTS THAT SERVE

by Marsha Johnson
Spirit in Action Advisory Board Member

WHAT: At the holidays and other special occasions, we celebrate friends and family members by giving a gift to SIA in their honor. Young and old have responded to us with joy and gratitude to be part of this life-giving gift.

WHY: Rather than depleting the earth’s resources, these gifts bring HOPE and OPPORTUNITY to our sisters and brothers in need around the world.

No more shopping.
No more trying to think of the perfect gift. This is it!
No more dust catchers.
No more standing in line at the Post Office.

HOW: It’s as easy as 1-2-3-4
1 – Address an envelope to Tanya Cothran, SIA Administrator PO Box 141045, Minneapolis MN 55414 or email spiritinaction@sbcglobal.net
2 – Send your list of names and addresses of folks you’re honoring, and the occasion.
3 – Include a check for your tax-deductible contribution to SIA. (*Remember, one new business can be started with just $150!)
4 – Tanya will send a card to those on your list, acknowledging that you have given a contribution in their honor for the occasion. She’ll also send you a receipt.

LET SIA DO YOUR HOLIDAY SHOPPING FOR YOU!!! Your gift-giving can be a beautiful blessing.

Report from a SIA Supporter in Kenya
Contributed by Paul Edwards, SIA Contributor

In June, Paul Edwards, a long time supporter of Spirit in Action, had the opportunity to travel to Eldoret, Kenya. He was there to visit Samuel & Rhoda Teimuge and volunteer in their school and the Ukweli Training Center for sustainable agriculture. Since Del Anderson and SIA have worked closely with the Teimuges, we asked for a report from Paul during his visit. His report on the Small Businesses demonstrate SIA’s real impact in Kenya.

Mama Ruth Business: Dennis Kiprop (SIA SBF Coordinator, Kenya) took Paul to visit several of the new SIA Small Business groups near Eldoret including “Mama Ruth Business” (pictured above) with business leader Salina. Paul reported, “She told me several times how important the program was to the well-being of her family!”

Mama Ruth Business is located in the village of Ilula, which is near Samuel Teimuge’s Ukweli Training Center and is about 15km northeast of the city of Eldoret in Kenya. In the 3-month report they submitted after receiving their second grant installment of $50, Salina reports that the business earned US$43 in profit and reinvested $29 of that back into the business to expand their shop. After one year in business they had earned USD$93 in profit! That’s not an insubstantial amount!

Salina writes that she is proud to have learned how to run a business and feels much better about her future now. SIA is able to instill so much hope in people who are just waiting for someone to believe in them

Mary Chemeitdi’s Chicken Rearing Business: Paul Edwards also had the chance to visit Mary Chemeitdi’s Chicken Rearing Business in Ilula, Kenya. Mary has been in the SIA SBF program for just over three months. She has been selling cloth to the community for some time and has just started growing chickens for laying eggs.

Mary currently has eight hens and plans to have several dozen hens by the end of the year. She will sell both chickens and eggs to fill the community’s high demand.

Paul reported after the visit: “Mary is very enthusiastic about SIA. I think that she is a good businesswoman, and I believe that she will be a strong contributor to the community in the future. We talked about community development, and she was very interested and added her viewpoints to the discussion.”

~ SIA SMALL BUSINESS FUND ~

~Please consider contributing $5 to SIA for the printing and sending of this newsletter to our many supporters!~

“The greatest insurance for the permanent success of any undertaking is first drench it in silence and then bless it with prayer.”
- Glenn Clark, America’s Greatest Need Today

Pictured right: Dennis Kipro with business leader Mary Chemeitdi. Read her story left.
Exciting Dollar-for-Dollar Matching Grant!

Spirit in Action (SIA) was founded in 1996 by Del Anderson, a young man of only 90 years, who had a dream for an organization that would “encourage and support people to know that they can co-create with God to sustain themselves in the world.”

Now, thirteen years later, SIA is a vibrant non-profit organization charged with the mission to be “a network of committed people world-wide who are serving God by empowering others.” We keep our office small and overhead low, using local volunteers in each country to train and support the new small business leaders.

One individual at a time, those who contribute to Spirit in Action are empowering individuals in developing countries and giving them the support they need to succeed and thrive. You are a part of this success! We are so grateful for your past support.

This year we have a special opportunity to have your donation matched dollar-for-dollar by a special Challenge Grant.

This grant will match all contributions to SIA, up to $10,000 between now and the end of the year. Would you consider a gift to SIA this year to continue to change lives and help those who are most in need?

It is such a blessing to be a part of an organization that is making real change in people’s lives and giving them hope for a better future. Thank you for your support of Spirit in Action!

We gratefully acknowledge these donors who have contributed to Spirit in Action from May 1, 2009 to November 1, 2009.

Anonymous (4)  
Tish & John Bayer  
June Berry  
Jan Burnett  
Tanya & Boyd Cothran (Honoring the marriage of Suzanne Thomas & Toby Weinert)  
Helen Dannelly  
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Peter & Donna Thomas  
Joan & Ellen Visser  

Business leader, Felester Mgemezulu , sells her group’s produce at a market in Malawi. She plans to use her portion of the group’s US$421 profit to build a house.

A Special THANK YOU to Dennis Johnson for sharing his lovely music with Spirit in Action and donating all proceeds from his spring piano recital to SIA. Thank you also to all who attended, contributed and bought CDs.

Yes! I want to support Spirit in Action:  
Name(s)  
Address  
City, State, Zip  
Email  
I (we) would like to make a gift in honor of:  
I (we) would like to make a gift in memory of:  
I (we) wish to remain anonymous:  

Please include your contribution with this form and mail to:

Spirit in Action  
PO Box 141045  
Minneapolis MN 55414-1045  

Enclosed is my $5 donation to help cover the mailing costs of this newsletter.

Remember, all donations to Spirit in Action are tax deductible! Tax ID# 93-1207351

Kabwana Kange and his group in the DRC sell eggs after school to pay for their school fees.

We gratefully acknowledge these donors who have contributed to Spirit in Action from May 1, 2009 to November 1, 2009.
**Sharing the Gift**—is a SIA program, added in 2006, which promotes the sustainability of the SIA Small Business Fund. As Christians, we are called to serve those less fortunate than ourselves. It is a spiritual truth that blessings multiply when they are shared. Also, we are blessed as we bless others. Each business group has received the gift of a grant to begin a small business. **We ask that they pass the blessing forward to help others...**

**Thoughts from Africa about Sharing the Gift**

“The greatest gift we share as SIA family is GOD’S LOVE. Sharing the Gift is really a good initiative and has an impact not only to the participating groups, but also those around them who witness the program. Groups #1-2 (in Eldoret, Kenya) have completed a one year business cycle and they are to identify which specific group they will share with. Mama Ruth Business, a grocery business, will share their ideas and strategies with another community group to begin a business. **Agricultural Produce Group will share potato seeds with a developing group in the community.**” – Dennis Kiprop (Kenya)

“In the beginning, people were uncertain about this program. As the coordinator, I answered many questions from the groups. But through prayers and some guidelines from SIA, the groups have welcomed this program and it is now very important to them. **Sharing the Gift is not about giving only, but you can share many ideas like praying together, uplifting someone’s skills, etc.** In my training sessions I quote some bible verses which talk about giving, loving friends. I thank God that now the groups are going on well with this and the community is growing up.” – Godfrey Matovu (Uganda)

In the DRC, the Ananas Fruit business group (which grows and sells pineapple) generously contributed enough start-up funds to support another new business in their community. The new business sells bananas in the market. – Jacob Lipandasi (DRC)

**SIA Grant: Moringa in Ghana:** Since Christian Action and Support (ChAS) received a SIA Community Grant in 2008 they have tirelessly promoted the value of the Moringa tree in their native Ghana. **Moringa grows well in the Ghanaian climate and is an important nutritional supplement for the local nutrient-deficient diet.** The seeds are ground into powder and added to breads and traditional food dishes. ChAS has hosted over a hundred workshops in schools, churches, and prisons, and was recently able to arrange the sale of one ton of Moringa seeds to Cameroon, generating income opportunities for many small-scale Moringa growers. **Pictured above left:** Students harvest Moringa plants.
Part of the mission of Spirit in Action is to build networks of support for people all over the world. Del Anderson, SIA’s founder, routinely sent hundreds of letters each month asking people about their challenges, sharing spiritual guidance and giving nonstop encouragement. Continuing these strong relationships in SIA is one of the real joys of my position as SIA Administrator.

In a recent communication, Jacob Lipandasi and Jacky Buhoro, a loving, caring couple dedicated to helping those in need in their war torn country of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), wrote to me of their vision of helping street children in their community get ahead in life.

Jacob and Jacky’s solution? They have proposed to SIA a Special Educational Program for Street Children to provide practical life skills and extra study attention to these vulnerable children. I was moved by their drive to once again help those around them in need. And I was truly shocked at how little the program would cost! In their proposal, literacy tuition for street children this year would only cost $5/month per child, that’s only $1,900 to provide help for 38 students for 10 months! It is truly amazing the significant impact that such a modest sum of money can have on the lives of so many children in DRC.

What about higher education? This proposal also includes a request for college tuition for a local young man, Jackson BAKA-RAKA (age 20). It would cost only $500 for Jackson to attend the Université Officielle de Bukavu in the department of Mineral and Geological Science for one year! The DRC has about 83 kinds of minerals and precious stones and it is typically only the children from rich families who are able to gain this kind of knowledge.

We value this type of proposal, which uses currently available resources (teaching skills), to improve the community with little outside support. This proposal is something SIA wants to support—and we welcome your contributions to make this possible.

I thank you for your support that makes all of SIA’s programs possible—it is an honor to serve Spirit by taking Action in the world.

It is projects like these, developed through our strong SIA international network that make me realize how little it takes for me to support real change in the world by aiding someone to pursue their educational goals as I have been able to pursue mine.

Tanya Cothran, SIA Admin